

Ask the VMD



Leon Riegel Tim Trayer Edgar Sheaffer

A reader asks:
What considerations should I make when selecting new breeding stock for my hog herd?

Dr. Trayer comments:

The one most important fact to consider in the selection of new breeding stock, especially boars, is to start three months in advance.

If you are selecting gilts from your own herd, you will have to start six to eight months in advance and that will start in the farrowing house.

With any new stock added to the facility from outside your own herd, there are several critical considerations.

You should look at the person you're buying the animals from very closely, primarily their herd health program. The old adage, "You can buy your problems" pertains as well to the swine selection as to

anything else you might buy for the farm.

It is wise to select animals from a farmer that has taken the time to have his herd certified free from pseudorabies, also called mad itch, and brucellosis. Certification for these two diseases requires either an annual blood test of all breeding stock or blood tests on 1/4 of the breeding stock every 90 days, after an initial two bleedings within a 90-day period.

Find out about the farmer's vaccination schedule for the replacement stock. Whether it is for a boar, sow, or gilt, the following vaccination schedule is a minimum.

Every time a sow goes through the farrowing house, she should receive leptospirosis vaccination, the five way strain. And erysipelas vaccine should be administered at the same time.

Boars should be vaccinated twice a year with the erysipelas bacterin and pigs that are weaned between six and eight weeks of age should receive the vaccine too. This should be boosted again when selecting out the gilts for replacement, or the boars.

The Lepto vaccine should be given to the boar prior to turning him in with the new breeding stock, or turning the gilts in. The gilts should be boosted with the vaccine every time through the farrowing house, and the boars twice a year.

Atrophic rhinitis history of the farm should also be sought out before buying hogs. This is a disease believed to be caused by a bacteria, Bordetella bronchiseptica.

If you see any clinical signs of atrophic rhinitis, such as bent noses with any deviations to the right or left or any blood in the pen

coming from the noses, you should not buy any breeding stock from the seller unless this can be clinically proven not to be atrophic rhinitis.

Without these clinical signs of the disease, it will be hard to tell whether there are any animals infected.

One question you might ask the seller is whether he has taken the time to have a slaughter animal checked by his veterinarian and what was found.

What is usually done in a slaughter check by a veterinarian is: 1. observe the animals prior to slaughter for general health; 2. observe the slaughter line for any external abnormalities, such as excessive amounts of abscesses, bruising, and swelling; 3. watch the slaughter line for joint abscesses, adhesions of the lungs to the internal carcass, and overall disposition of the carcass as it moves down the line; 4. check livers for ascarid or round worm migrations; 5. visual exam of the internal parasitism of the internal gastro-intestinal tract; and 6. check some of the heads by cutting open the snout and looking for signs of atrophic rhinitis.

After this, a report is given

back to the producer, along with any recommendations.

Another consideration in buying breeding stock is to ask the seller if there has been any lameness in the herd, particularly in the boars. This could be a sign of myco plasma infection in the herd, or general bacterial joint infection, either strep or staph, which usually occurs at a very early age from abrasion of the knees or improper dipping of the naval cord at birth.

If there is a question of the health of the breeding stock you are about to buy, you should get an independent opinion from your veterinarian.

The seller should be worming all pigs after weaning at 6 to 8 weeks of age, and repeating two weeks later. All breeding stock should be wormed a minimum of twice a year.

The seller should also tell you what wormer he is using and he should be rotating the produce he uses. If he does not rotate, he should have a fecal and carcass check done at least twice every year for signs of parasitism because one wormer does not get all the internal parasites of swine.

Does the seller have a problem with lice and mange. If so, what is he using or doing about the problem.

Mange is a hard problem to treat because there are no readily available products that are effective against it. The most effective treatment, Lindane, has been on and off the market.

The seller should be able to give you general performance information. For boars, he should be able to give you information on his feed conversion, how the boar's individual performance compares to the rest of his stablemates and relatives.

If, after checking out the

seller's health records, and performance records of the swine, you decide to purchase some of the breeding stock, the next step is to have the new animals blood tested, whether you're within the state or moving across state-lines. All new additions to your herd should be blood tested.

Blood testing should be done for pseudorabies, as a minimum, brucellosis, and it isn't out of line while you're drawing the blood to check for leptospirosis.

Test before the animals leave the seller's farm, no matter what the status of the producer is, whether or not he is certified brucellosis free. And, retest after thirty days of bringing them home to the farm.

The animal should remain in isolation for those thirty days in the event of a positive result the animal can be identified without harming the rest of your herd.

Next week we will discuss the treatment of the new breeding stock once you've brought them home to your farm.

If you have a question you would like answered by the team from Valley Animal Hospital, send it to Ask the VMD, Box 366, Lititz, PA 17543. Questions will be kept anonymous on request.

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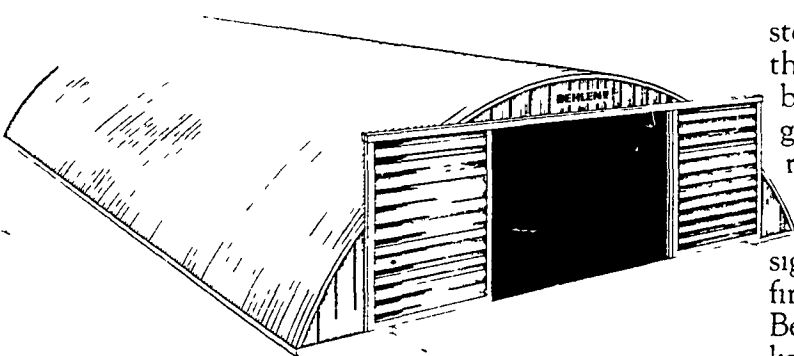
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WEST CHESTER — The Chester County Historical Society is sponsoring the first Annual Preservation Conference on the critical subject of rural preservation.

The two day conference held Friday and Saturday, March 21 and 22, 1980 on the campus of West Chester State College, West Chester.

Main focus will be on the conservation of open space and the maintenance of prime agricultural land.

The cost for the two-day conference, including lunches, \$35.

The speakers for the conference and themes for the workshops will address four basic issues which must be confronted in effectively implementing rural preservation programs. They are philosophical, political, legal, and practical.

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